INTERFACE AND INTEGRATION IN CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

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Introduction and Overview

In Richardson (1988), my last scholarly foray into these matters,[2] I endeavored to present the *natural interfaces* of mainstream economics and Biblical discipleship. I think of these as topics in economics that should be *naturally* interesting to Christian scholars. I urged more ambitious exploration of these interfaces, in preference to weary defenses of capitalism over socialism and turgid frets over positivist and quantitative methods, neither of which the rest of the economics profession found very inspiring.[3]

Here I will briefly and selectively assess the past generation's notable and commendable exploration of those natural interfaces. I will then assess recent attempts to *integrate* faith and economics, a deeper and more demanding quest than interfacing, aiming at being true simultaneously to both distinctive Christian principles and to integral economic concerns. Carter (2005) is a thoughtful exemplary foundation for this. Integration is also illustrated by the parallel quests to establish a genuinely feminist economics or an integral Islamic economics. Integration has often been a sort of holy grail of scholars who labor in

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[1] This paper is a chapter in Paul Oslington (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics*, OUP, 2013. References to "this volume" refer to the Oxford Handbook rather than the ACE Discussion Papers. Earlier drafts have been greatly improved by commentary from Charles Anderton, Donald Dutkowsky, Jim Halteman, Stephen Smith, John Tiemstra, Andrew Yuengert, and especially Paul Oslington, though I remain solely responsible for any remaining errors or misjudgments.

[2] I briefly updated my Richardson (1988) "agenda" in a four-page introduction to its reproduction, Richardson (1994), and in a Richardson (2000) review of Marsden (1997). See also Hartropp (1997), for a comprehensive and carefully annotated bibliography of interfaces between Christian faith and economics ("what Christianity has to say concerning economics," in his own words).

[3] My intermittent North American sparring partner over this span, John Tiemstra, shares the first preference but not the second. See Tiemstra (1993), whose references to literature from the 1970s and 1980s, especially, are comprehensive. His (2009) reprise of his 1993 themes endorses "heterodox" approaches that his earlier paper characterized as "institutional" approaches. My view in the appendix to this chapter is going to be that the orthodox mainstream of economics has widened impressively to include the most promising of the approaches that Tiemstra endorses. Yuengert (2012), discussed below, can be taken to agree with this view of the widening of economics, but to fret properly that even wide, modern economics *still* allows the positive to dominate the normative, in a way that moral philosophy would challenge.

Christian economics. It comes close to what George Marsden (1997) conceived as "Christian Scholarship" and to what many others (e.g., Starr (2011)) call "integration of faith and learning" or "distinctively Christian economics" (e.g., Williams (1996), p. 13, or Oslington et al. (2011, p. 1).[4]

What would be an observable measure of success at deep, integral integration? I endorse something very practical and familiar, but very daunting as well. Successful integrative work will be read with engagement – as measured by citation counts and related metrics – by *both* economists of any and all belief systems *and* by Christian scholars of any and all disciplines other than economics. Admittedly this measure narrows the scope of what I survey. But if Marsden-style research is our focus, then dependence on citations cannot be dismissed as an unduly confining criterion. Indeed, citation is a huge part of the foundational consensus on what scholarship *is*, in contrast to commentary, exposition, interpretation, and application. I use a citation software package called Publish or Perish, Harzing (2007).[5]

[4] So-called integration has been a self-conscious Protestant priority, especially among evangelical and Calvin-inspired Protestants. Other Christians have treated it more naturally, hence implicitly giving it less priority. On distinctly Roman Catholic and Orthodox work in interface and integration, see this volume's chapters by Payne and Yuengert; Part B of the volume also features other distinct and denominational approaches.

[5] Citation counts are of course only part of scholarship's foundation, an incomplete indicator of scholarly "quality," however that term is conceived. But surely something discouraging can be learned when research contributions are rarely or never cited, an all-too-frequent occurrence below. And that, in turn, precludes the kind of fascinating research in citations themselves, which has blossomed fertilely in the past few years, especially regarding "cross-citation" in interdisciplinary endeavors (Howard (2011)). Harzing's Publish or Perish software (Harzing.com) works with raw citations data from Google Scholar. This has both advantages and disadvantages, compared to alternative citation sources like Thomson-Reuters ISI Web of Science, both documented transparently in Harzing (2007, 2008). The key advantages for our purposes – compared to ISI Web of Science – are its more inclusive treatment of citations in (and of) books; in (and of) leading series of Working Papers (e.g., from the British Centre for Economic Policy Research or the American National Bureau of Economic Research); and in (and of) "lesser" and more specialized journals. *Faith & Economics*, the refereed (since 1999) journal of the American Association of Christian Economists, is one of those lesser journals. Over its first decade of existence, it had less than 1/3 of a citation per year per article (leaving out the single leading article with 39 citations). This compares quite unfavorably – by a factor of 4½! – to another lesser, but more venerable, journal with a somewhat broader mandate, the *Review of Social Economy*, whose articles (excluding its most cited) averaged 1½ citations per year per article. Both journals, of course, fall many dimensions short of general-readership economics journals. Comparable calculations for the *Economic Journal* and the *American Economic Review* over the same time frame are roughly 7 and 51, respectively (the 51 is for the top 100-most-cited, and is hence not strictly comparable).

I infer that my late-1980s hope to encourage scholarship in the natural interfaces of economics and faith was widely shared and reasonably well-received. Part 2 of my paper describes highlights of such scholarship briefly, parts of which are detailed elsewhere in this volume.[6]

Part 3 turns to recent and prospective integrative Christian scholarship in economics. I surmise that progress on recognizable (cite-able) integration is still in its infancy, but is growing healthily. There has been a proliferation of innovation in economics itself, almost all of which involves fruitful broadening of its traditional methods and subject matter. This broadening innovation creates fertile soil in which to pursue integrative Christian economics. But Christian scholars are, as yet, under-represented, as judged by citation counts. Several recent high-profile American efforts along integrative lines are virtually uncited, even by fellow economist-integrators!

I end the body of this paper in Part 4 by speculating about why Marsden-style integrative scholarship seems so hard in economics. I have limited myself to easily accessed English-language contributions to interface and integration during the 1990s and 2000s. I am positive I have missed a number of thoughtful treatments authored in English by economists and others from the growing Church-of-the-"South," and, of course, I have neglected non-English treatments. In the appendix, I briefly discuss my reasons for other limitations. In particular, this chapter pays little or no attention to the family of so-called "heterodox economics," nor to economic interpretations of Scripture, nor to economics as a "helping profession" for denominations, para-church organizations, or voters, nor to economics and generic ethics, nor to material covered carefully in other chapters of this handbook.

1. Preliminary Distinctions

1.1 Interface and Integration, Scholarship

I view *interfaces* between faith and economics as natural meeting places, intersecting concerns, sometimes intersecting methods (e.g., stewardship and optimization). *Integration*, by contrast, connotes more overlap, topics that might be of common interest (e.g., collective goods, whose distribution is not subject to familiar scarcity), even common methods (e.g., moral suasion as an enforcement device). I do not mean to draw the distinction between interface and integration too rigidly. Of course there is a continuum, as might be captured by

[6] Specifically the entirety of Part D in this volume (Economic Analysis of Religion), and its chapters on development and environment in Part C, and on happiness, poverty, gender, and gift in Part E.

using the terms *shallow* and *deep integration* if they were used as synonyms.[7] Integrative scholarship is inherently less casual, less incidental, harder.

In relating integration especially to Marsden's "outrageous idea" of Christian scholarship, I am embracing his implicit insistence that it be of integral interest to both Christians and to incumbent scholars, whether Christian or not. In accepting the authority of "incumbent" scholars, and in employing citation counts, I am taking a stand that puts me at odds with so-called "prophetic" approaches to scholarship, approaches that insist that Christians remain skeptical, and even critical, of the scholarly powers-that-be, along with their methods and elitism. Henley (2004), for example, accepts this approach as "constructive engagement," but accepts equally a more critical approach that he calls "prophetic detachment." And Fea et al. (2010), reviewed by Chapman (2012), take Marsden to task for yielding too much ground to (secular) scholarly authorites, who could not care less about attempts by Christian (historians in their case) to integrate faith and discipline.

I side with Marsden's constructive engagement. His 1997 book is devoted first to reviewing how Christian – and (implicitly) other intellectually coherent religious – perspectives have been shunned by today's mainstream higher education, "hollowing it out," and creating a vacuum filled by scientism and quasi-political secular agendas. He then works hard for four chapters out of six to re-integrate Christianity into scholarly agendas and communities, adding an appendix of specific illustrations. His aim is to re-enrich scholarship in a way that scholars of every persuasion would respect, though not necessarily embrace. He devotes one chapter to constructive "rules" for doing all this winsomly. I have been influenced most by his first rule for accomodating religious scholars' "messages to the legitimate demands of a pluralistic setting" — that is, to abjure any argument based on "special revelation" ((Marsden (1997), pp. 11, 47-8).

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[7] Oslington (2011, pp. 16, 17) implicitly accepts this distinction as he distinguishes the "economics of religion," the most fruitful of the interfaces surveyed below, from integration – "religion enriching economics itself, just as engagement with psychology and sociology have [done] ... in recent years." Yuengert's chapter, this volume, on Roman Catholic Economics also helps to clarify this distinction. He observes that recent generations of both church authorities and Catholic scholars have chosen to do economics (and theology) that would *serve* the church in its conception of and instruction in "good" human nature and society (the "common good"). They have not (as yet) developed much priority for developing "a fully integrated treatment of Roman Catholic theology and economics, a combined field" (Yuengert (this volume), p. 1). Yuengert (2012), however, is an extended treatment of the way venerable moral philosophy might help them begin the integration quest.

Henley and Marsden's critics obviously find such pluralistic scruples distasteful, and maybe downright unfaithful. As I observe above, my contrasting acceptance of Marsden's scruples narrows my coverage.

1.2 The Broad Substance of Economics

My conception of economics is broader than what has historically occupied Christian writing. Because the broader conception emphasizes social groups and interactions, with individuals as an extreme, a group of one, it comes closer to the world of modern economics, as seen, for example, in Benhabib et al. (2011), Frank (2011), or Manski (2000). It also suggests a natural way for Christians to integrate their faith with economics, since Christian identity and social behavior are at the core of faith (more on this in Part 3 below).

What are the essentials of this broader conception of economics? Realizing objectives subject to constraints is central. Realizing objectives is merely purpose-driven activity. Activity can be intrinsically immaterial (hence unmeasurable, like entertaining, leading, learning, or consulting). Materialism, utility, profits, "preferences" are all less central. Constraints reflect many varieties of scarcity (time, energy, lifespan), and differ for collective (public) and private goods. Constraints include asymmetric and scarce information, especially regarding the (many) futures that exist, leading information to be considered an objective also, and expectations to be the poor substitute for information. Conservation of energy, time, and other scarce resources is central, leading to fundamental roles for productivity and cost-effectiveness. Maximization, rationality, and consumerism are all less central. Production, distribution, and exchange (transactions) are central. Markets are less central, whether local or global. Though property rights are central, where those property rights reside – with individuals, cooperatives, limited-liability "capitalists," or governments – is less central.

1.3 The Real Domain of Economics

The "real" domain of this broad economics is ironically mis-perceived. Economics as purpose-driven, constraint-ridden behavior applies more naturally to *groups* formed for some narrowly-defined objectives, that range from starting a family, to being an official agent (union) for workers, to producing any product or service. And group-to-group purchases and sales that involve employment, supply chains, and marketing far outweigh those that involve the hackneyed "individual consumer." To illustrate using the most familiar such producer group, firm-to-firm transactions are more than half of real commerce, and even larger if we were to conceive charities, governments, multi-person households, and other non-corporate groups as "firms."[8] "Economic man" and economics as a study of *individual* preferences and choice are much over-studied, over-rated, and over-wrought. Exclusive self-interest as a possible human perversion is far less threatening than exclusive ethnic, corporate, and national interest.

Correspondingly, economics as a study of purpose-driven, scarcity-ridden firms, missions, and other social groups is woefully *under*-studied. But the economics of religion, the most successful of the past generation's many interfaces, is beginning to change that, as discussed in Part 2. It builds on the well-established economics of the firm, seeing congregations, denominations, and even major religions as firm-like producers of an array of social and religious services. Firms themselves, of course, are cohesive social units, with identities (obviously and legally), cultures and norms. Probing the frontier of economics even more deeply is the new social economics and identity economics of Part 3. It begins to ascribe value to group membership itself, independent of the more familiar goods and services that a group might supply. Sometimes the value is positive – affirmation or belonging. Sometimes it is negative – non-conformity or stigmatization. In either case, purpose-driven agents begin to supplement their more familiar objectives with positional and relational objectives, such as being top-rated, or accepted as "white," even though not, or as always avoiding bribery or corruption. Scarcity persists in these new worlds, but objectives (or preferences in the narrower language) expand to include new behaviors, many of which, such as conformity to norms and values, are normally associated with religion.

2. The Growing Fullness of Faith-Economics Interfaces

I infer that my late-1980s hope to encourage scholarship in the natural interfaces of economics and faith was timely and reasonably well-respected. The 1990s and 2000s have witnessed, in my opinion, some outstanding contributions. Many of these have been grouped under the expansive and elastic field that has come to be called the economics of religion, well represented in Part D of this volume, in Oslington (2003), Ch. 15-24, and in a dedicated Oxford Handbook, McCleary (2011). Other scholarly interface contributions are less well-developed, and some are, frankly, just nascent. My treatment below is consciously selective,

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[8] Virtually any developed-economy input-output table shows that half or more of recorded transactions are inter-sectoral, not "final demand." Even within sectors, predominant transactions are inter-firm sales and purchases.

because I am committed to Marsden's conception of scholarship that engages both garden-variety scholars and Christians (and other religious adherents).

2.1 Economics of Religion

The "economics of religion" has come to span the application of established economic principles to the domain of conventional religion, its beliefs, behavior, and institutions. In a sense, it imposes economics on religion "to see how well it can do."[9] For example, it applies familiar micro- and inter-temporal economic frameworks to congregational and denominational (club) competition in providing elements of social capital. It anticipates research discussed below on how religious identity and norms affect altruism, fertility, education and family production, then in turn how those may affect economy-wide institutions and development. It draws on sociology, psycholgy, ethics, and neuroscience while maintaining a clearly recognizable economics frame. It has become increasingly data-oriented and empirical (McCleary (2011), Ch. 18-19).

Surveys of this literature, as well as peer-reviewed contributions to it, clearly pass the citation test of integral interest. Iannaccone's (1998) survey of this literature has averaged almost 57 cites per year in its 15-year life, and McCleary's subsequent (2006) overview with Barro has averaged 33.[10]

One of the implicit but important strengths of this work is its frequent focus on social groups as the agents of economic decision-making. This focus skirts the thorny questions of what motivates individuals, what it is to be a human being, though those questions are not neglected in this field. That skirting, in turn, makes natural and palatable the assumptions of purpose-driven (rational) choice toward objectives that usually have (scarce) resource costs embodied in budget constraints. Most social groups, after all, are purpose-driven "firms,"

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[9] The characterization in the first sentence is from Iannacone (2010), p. 2, who also remarks, "Nor should one confuse the field with *religious economics* – be it Islamic economics, Christian economics, Catholic social doctrine, rabbinic writings on commerce, or biblical teachings about wealth and poverty." In the language of the current paper, at least the first two categories are "integrative," *not* pursued by the economics of religion. If the economics of religion is "when economics drives up to the door of a church," as Iannaccone himself once claimed, then religious economics is perhaps when religious engines replace the original equipment in economics vehicles.

[10] However, Iannacone's next-best-cited three papers in recognized economics journals attract 30, 8, and 6 cites per year. McCleary's corresponding next-best-cited three attract 18, 12, and 4 per year. The *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, in which Iannacone, McCleary and others in this interface field frequently publish, attracts only slightly over 1.2 cites per year per article for its top 100, doing calculations comparable to those above in note 4.

whose pursuit of those purposes rests on values such as charity, or stewardship (over time as well as in a particular time window), or fiduciary responsibility, that translate readily into warmly defensible measures of cost effectiveness and maximal risk-adjusted return.[11]

To its credit, the economics of religion has also created a penumbra for safe scholarship by religious economists that does not exactly match its core concerns. This is not a minor accomplishment. Economists of no particular faith are much more naturally interested in pre-screened, pre-sanctioned, professionally embraced research, and much more likely to examine and cite it.[12] This is, by the conception of this paper, a catalyst for safe scholarship in other interfaces, and a step toward integration of faith and learning in economics.

There is no strict boundaries for the economics of religion. Some of the interfaces described below could easily reside in its terrain. Yet their essence is distinctive enough to give them special attention here.

2.2 Other Interfaces

There are interfaces of faith and economics that fall outside the normally conceived boundaries of the economics of religion. I think two of these interfaces have special potential for Marsden-style Christian (and Jewish) scholarship in economics.

"Positional" and Conflict Economics. Judeo-Christian and most other religious value systems abjure coercion and its oft-ocurring roots, envy, greed, and addiction to control.[13] Economics as a discipline prioritizes studies of non-coercive transactions (e.g., those in the "core"), and rarely assigns value to "position" – an individual or group's economic outcomes *relative* to others. This imbalance of priorities is somewhat surprising. Relative status as an end, and coercion as a means, are facts of life even to the most casual observer. They are admittedly "zero-sum" transactions and relations, meaning that gains to one agent are

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[11] See Oslington (2005a), for example, on the potential for faith-based not-for-profit (NFP) groups to become successful contractors when governments outsource social services. In ongoing research, I show how conventional freedom of entry for faith-based and other NFPs imposes cost-lowering and quality-raising competitive discipline on for-profit rivals. Many NFP health clinics, charter schools, and poverty-oriented service agencies have religious objectives. Roughly half of American hospitals are NFPs, though not all are religiously motivated.

[12] Their attitude toward research that stands outside monitoring umbrellas like the economics of religion is understandable as statistical discrimination – nothing good comes out of Nazareth.

[13] Coveting, theft, murder, war, "greed that is idolatry," and "Lording one's authority over them" are all behaviors with ample scriptural cautions.

identically losses to another, but they can still be studied using the familiar frame of pursuing objectives subject to constraints.

It is thus surprising how little Christian economists have interacted with this material. Though Charles H. Anderton has made several widely cited contributions to general conflict economics,[14] his elegant (2001) exposition of possible Christian perspectives on conflict economics has zero citations in over a decade. And though Garfinkel's and Skaperdas' (2012a) handbook samples the widely-scattered literature, religion is woefully under-represented. There is one bland chapter, that sweepingly "reflects on ... religion – as a possible source of both conflict and cooperation," in the bland words of the handbook's own editors (2012b).

Christians have interacted even less with positional economics, whose origins in Hirsch (1977) include recognizable Christian themes. Its modern treatment, especially by Frank (e.g, 2005), reveals the kind of mis-guided incentives and economic waste that normally tantalize scholars of faith.

Moreover, positional economics has pregnant relevance to persistent poverty, a natural Judeo-Christian concern, reviewed in the next part of this paper in Loury's (2002) and Barrett's (2005) contributions to the "new" social economics.

Objectives, Incentives, Mechanism Design, Law-and-Economics. Judeo-Christian economists have natural interests in the way law and institutions shape, "tutor," discipline, and soften economic incentives. For example, the middle 18 of the 33 chapters of Levine's (2010) Oxford *Handbook of Judaism and Economics* are oriented this way, including chapters on labor unions, organ donation, and "efficient" breach-of-contract. Or for example, there has been a lively, multi-decade debate among British economists over whether the joint-stock, limited liability form of capitalist firm is really consistent with Christian values.[15] Though these interface contributions are valuable, they are not frequently cited, in part because of their narrowly specialized topicality. What has been lacking until recently are canonical forms to treat this subject matter in a framework that all economists would recognize and

[14] Conflict economics is also called the economics of appropriation, predatory economics. It spans sub-disciplines that include defense and peace economics, the economics of genocide, and the economics of formally similar zero-sum activities, like gambling, on which Grinols (2009) is a representative interface contribution. Heterodox economists and other critics who complain that economics under-studies power relationships seem not to have examined this expansive literature.

[15] See Hay (1989), pp. 166-75, Copp (2011a,b), Higginson (2011), Beed and Beed (2011).

accept (and cite, as they build research extensions). Roland Bénabou and Jean Tirole have in my opinion pioneered such canonical forms, pregnant with potential relevance to Judeo-Christian economics scholarship.

Bénabou and Tirole (2011a), for example, is a broadly relevant mechanism design paper. It presents a formal-but-flexible characterization of preferences (objectives) that includes social regard among its arguments, either social esteem with positive value, or social stigma with negative values. It then presents a representative (a principal for the agents with preferences) whose objective is to maximize a carefully conceived metric for social welfare (the "common good"). The hook for Judeo-Christian scholars is that the representative's (principal's) ideal mechanisms include carefully-defined "moral suasion" as well as material incentives. It should be especially interesting to them that the former often serves the common good better than the latter, and "should" displace the latter. This way of thinking tightly about social esteem and stigma is redolent with Christian convictions that life in the Lord's real "kingdom" ought to look very different from life in the crass "kingdom of this world." And the Bénabou-Tirole approach, more than a decade old now, opens rigorous ways for Christian scholars to conceive many of their common concerns: changes in preferences when one is "re-born from above"; laws and policies that express and embody moral values (so-called "expressive law"); corruptions of the link between representatives and their agents (relevant to principals as diverse as heads of households, employers, pastors, and politicians).[16]

3. The Quest for Integration

Though integrative Christian economics is conceptually a challenge beyond the economics of natural interfaces with religion, there is of course a continuum between the extremes of the implied spectrum. Part 2 of this paper actually ordered its treatment, so that the very natural economics of religion came first, and somewhat more integrative interfaces came second. Likewise here in Part 3, I begin with some recent efforts at integrative research that were, in

[16] Moreover, their (2010) paper surveys formal models of corporate social responsibility, involving psychology as well as economics. Their (2011b, 2006) papers rigorously formalize a conception of social interchange among agents with "moral identity," based on their valuation of social relationships that have the character of assets; agents' valuation is dependent on deep and not-fully-detectable character (introducing signaling and even, perhaps, agent doubt). Bénabou (2009) formally models groupthink (close to what Christian scholars must mean by sectarianism or cults) – defined as "'individually rational' collective reality denial."

my opinion, *not* integrative, at least not integrative enough to attract any attention. I then present some research in economic history (I call it telescopic) that combines interface and integration. I close with some recent and prospective efforts whose probability of success at integration seems likely to be much higher. These efforts come – or could come – from the "new" social economics, the economics of identity, and the potential for theological economics as a respected integrative scholarly field.

3.1 Unnoticed Attempts

One might have expected dedicated, peer-reviewed "bridge" journals[17] between economics and faith to feature early efforts in integration, with subsequent development and refinement leading to broader audiences. This has been the pattern, for example, in behavioral and experimental economics, and in the "scientific" study of religion. Alas, such expectations have met little realization. For example, two such journals reviewed and published nearly 20 of the papers presented at a November 2002 Baylor University Conference "on the integration of the Christian faith and scholarship in economics,"[18] with George Marsden keynoting the conference in the spirit of his influentional manifesto for serious Christian scholarship (Marsden (1997)). The 20 papers ranged across diverse material touching on anthropology, ethics, corporate organization, the philosophy of science, and theology. But few had any scholarly legacy in economics according to citation counts. One paper with both potential and pretension for integration, Green (2003),[19] appears not to have been followed up by either the author or others (it also has no citations). Furthermore the Henderson-Pisciotta book (2006) that included these and the rest of the papers from the Baylor Conference has only two citations in its first six years, and no customer reviews or discussions on the Amazon website.

3.2 Telescopic Interface-Integration Bridges

By "telescopic" scholarship, I mean scholarship that examines things at a distance with as much precision as possible. Historical distance is the obvious illustration, and economic history is the obvious sub-discipline to review. Here both Christian scholars and scholars

[17] For example, the now defunct *ACE (UK) Journal*, the American Association of Christian Economists' *Faith & Economics*, or the *Journal of Markets & Morality*.

[18] Henderson and Pisciotta (2003), p.1, introducing 6 papers in *Faith & Economics*; the other papers appeared in the *Journal of Markets & Morality*, 6 (2), Fall 2003.

[19] Green formally models the way that what he characterizes as "remembrance" can encourage current "investment" in future self-control, that in turn ameliorates the notorious time inconsistency of economic objective-seeking.

who respect Christian influences have pioneered provocative and widely cited research in the past generation. Some of it has been macro-telescopic, some micro-telescopic.[20] The former is usually narrative economic history with a strong diagnostic inclination. Fogel (2000) and McCloskey (2006, 2010) are exemplars.[21] The latter is usually econometric economic history (cliometrics) that uses measures and indicators of Christian commitment or practice, controlling for other variables. Becker and Woessmann (2009), Becker (2011), and Woodberry (2011) are recent exemplars from scholars whose numerous contributions to this kind of work have established prominent professional reputations for them.[22]

Almost all of such research is logically and empirically rigorous, by the usual disciplinary standards.What makes it a bridge between interface and integration, however, is that faith is taken not only seriously, but also subtly. The best scholarship in this vein is at pains to differentiate Christian (even Protestant) roots of social norms from other sources, and to test nuanced accounts of how these norms shape economic outcomes through intervening causal influences like global migration and support for public education and the economic contributions of women.

3.3 The "New" Social Economics

What has come to be called "social economics" in the first of several Elsevier Handbooks devoted to it (Benhabib et al. (2011a)) has mushroomed in the past twenty-plus years.[23] It is "the study, with the *methods of economics,* of social phenomena in which aggregates affect individual choices."[24] The phenomena it covers – such as pursuit of status and other positional objectives (see the chapter by Heffetz and Frank (2011)), network linkages and "matching," social norms and conventions, and peer and neighborhood effects – have steadily widened and the rigor of its approach has continued to deepen.

These concerns would seem to provide a rich treasure trove for Christian economist-integrators to mine. They are, unfortunately, not yet well-represented, though they have begun to contribute to the closely-related economics of identity, discussed below. And

[20] With a continuum in between, of course, as illustrated in, for example, Rachel M. McCleary's work.
[21] Their citation counts are 28 per year for Fogel and 42 and 18, respectively, for the two McCloskey books.
[22] The Becker-Woessmann paper has been cited 36 times a year since publication.
[23] See also Becker and Murphy (2003) and Durlauf and Young (2001).
[24] The characterization is from Benhabib et al. (2011), p. xvii, with emphasis in the original. That Handbook also pulls Evolutionary Economics and Identity Economics, separately treated below, under its umbrella.

Christian economist-integrators actively contribute to an older, broader, and methodologically looser conception of social economics, sampled generically in a recent Elgar Handbook (Davis and Dolfsma (2008)) and in the context of Catholic Social Thought in Finn (2010).[25]

Barrett (2005), credited above for its interface contributions, is also tantalizing as a potential foundation for Christian economist-integrators. With the support of the Pew Charitable Trust for Christian Scholarship, Barrett gathered together a pre-eminent group of "new social" economists, not only in the edited volume but in a series of early-2000s collaborative workshops aimed at distilling the impact of the new methods for explaining persistent poverty. Though several of the authors have expressed Christian convictions publically, the focus was strictly on the new social economics and poverty. Among the richest chapters for economist-integrators were those that show how economically-consistent evolutionary dynamics can create poverty cycles, based on nothing more than unsupported beliefs that one social group has about another. Those same chapters, however, suggest that there are often many such equilibria, some "better" than others, and each fragile in the sense that modest perturbations (e.g., religious renewal, affirmative-action initiatives) can dramatically ameliorate average social prejudice and the poverty cycle itself.[26] Barrett's edited collection, unfortunately, is cited only a little more than 2 times per year.[27]

In much the same vein, featuring stigma and statistical discrimination rigorously, Loury (2002) is a still-foundational account of the economic impacts and policy implications of arbitrary, socially-assigned ("virtual") racial identity. Christian economist-integrators, as Loury has sometimes been in Pew-Charitable-Trust-funded seminars for aspiring economists, would do well to build broadly, and perhaps beyond race, on Loury's seminal work. It is

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[25] The older social economics covers a wide range of content, from conceptions and assessments of social justice and related institutions (e.g., labor unions, regulatory communities) to conventional studies in income and wealth distribution and economic mobility. Its principal peer-reviewed research outlet is the *Review of Social Economy*, though that journal welcomes contributions from any orientation, not necessarily Christian or even religious. Articles there are cited roughly 1.5 times per year.

[26] See Darity et al. (2006), Section 5, for a model in this same spirit, and Fogel (2000) for a rigorous economic-history argument in the same direction, featuring the central role of American Protestant "Awakenings" (such revivals, of course, occur elsewhere and in Catholicism and other religious traditions).

[27] Barrett continues to do and catalyze integrative work in these frames. He oversees a three-year colloquy called "The Economics of Global Poverty" with 12 younger scholars, as part of the nearly 20-year-old Calvin College Summer Seminars program. Its aim is "to help foster a community of scholars and teachers informed by the gospels and committed to rigorous innovation within the [economics] discipline and within the broader Christian community."

Loury's most cited research, with more than 40 cites per year in the decade since its publication in 2002.

3.4 Identity Economics

Though identity economics is classified by many editors as a type of social economics,[28] its particular approach is narrower and more rigorously distinctive. For purposes of modelling the relation of identity and intrinsically-valuable moral beliefs[29] to individual objectives (preferences) and choice, the most comprehensively flexible and fertile approach is arguably that of Bénabou-Tirole (2011).[30] This is also where Christian economist-integrators might comfortably begin building. The Bénabou-Tirole approach endogenizes "belief(s)," management of them, and investments in them, using formal economic logic, but drawing deeply on social psychology and sociology.[31] It allows people flexibly to be uncertain about their deep motivations (preferences), and models their attempt to re-construct (infer) this information, though imperfectly (in a Bayesian sense), from their own observable actions.[32] It implies a price-based conception of taboos. Because there are more than two periods of time, (the last of which could be an afterlife), their approach can model moral failure, apostasy and ostracism. It includes destructive, dysfunctional,[33] and oppositional identity formation, as well as more familiar pro-social identities. It can be generalized to multiple belief systems, with uncertain tradeoffs among their intrinsic values, and to inter-generational transmission of values within some sort of "family." It features varieties of sorting equilibria,

[28] See, for example, Bisin and Verdier (2011) and Fryer (2011) in Benhabib et al. (2011).

[29] Such beliefs obviously spring from religion and other moral reasoning, but also include conformity to a company or community, simple tradition, distinctive cultural emphases, and even stereotype and prejudice.

[30] Akerlof and Kranton (2005, 2010) present an alternative conceptualization. But it is less comprehensive and more idiosyncratic and malleable. Davis (2007), for example shows how their basic model can be re-interpreted ("inverted," he says) to become an individual's production-side model of multiple social identities. There are also a wealth of more targeted models of identity, e.g., Fryer's (forthcoming) three models of "acting white," based on signaling, oppositional culture, and what he calls "sabotage."

[31] Carter (2005), in a "biblically based theological reflection aimed at ... economics ... reality in the light of the resurrection," seems to anticipate the flowering of integral Christian identity economics in a concluding section that he dubs "Role Economics," and that references sociological research on the "self." Menzies (2008) is an innovative, dramatic dialog expanding on the differences between representative economic man and representative Christian (wo)man. It wryly sets the stage for recognizable Christian identity economics.

[32] It puts technical flesh on the wise Christian instincts of Britton (2007), pp. 25-26, alluding to the concept of meta-preferences.

[33] See also Fang and Loury (2005).

someimes multiple. It embodies a basic type of welfare analysis as well as mere behavioral prediction. The welfare conclusions include intriguing possibilities that investment in beliefs can be welfare-reducing. This possibility echoes the several contributions to Barrett (2005) that reveal how pursuit of identity can foment and maintain vicious poverty cycles.

Models of "group identity" are as yet more primitive,[34] though no less important given the dominant domain of inter-firm transactions in real life (see Part 1 above). Corporate citizenship, Corporate Social Responsibility, membership criteria for trade associatons and lobbying representation are all real-life moral concepts and institutions thar depend on group identity. Real-life principal-agent problems have multiple and competing levels of agency. There is also the multiplicity of substitute and complementary "groups" – family, firm, faith, ethnicity, polity – whose objectives and responsiveness to other groups are dauntingly diverse. To make Identity Economics operational for group identities requires, at a minimum, accounts of the genesis of familiar terms like family values, corporate culture, norm-setting creeds, and ethnic or national identity. Such accounts are better constructed by sociologists, anthropologists, theologians, and political philosophers than by economists. But once such accounts are coherent, economists can and will translate the relevance of Identity Economics to inter-group environments. Christian economist-integrators might actually have a comparative advantage in doing so!

Christian economist-integrators are beginning to make noteworthy contributions to the professional Economics-and-Identity literature. Menzies and Hay (forthcoming) is a particularistic[35] trial attempt to model and integrate Christian faith with identity economics; its economic and anthropoloical mechanisms, however, do not distinguish it very sharply from the generic economics literature that features a taste for altruism. Empirical research

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[34] By a model *of* group identity, I mean how a group establishes and manages its social identity vis-à-vis other groups with different group identities. I do not mean models of individual identification with pre-established groups and their values. That is well-covered in a general way by Bénabou andTirole (2011a). More specifically, though Akerlof and Kranton sometimes imply that their approach could generalize to group-identity formation, the closest they seem to come is their (2005) model of employee identification with the organization that employs them (civilian and military), conceiving insider-workers as those who intrinsically value their employer's pre-set values and outsider-workers as those who do not.

[35] Its particularism is in two characteristics: its convenient, but confining, choice of functional form (Cobb-Douglas with an intercept that varies positively with Christian "character" (= identity) and with altruism); and its ad hoc mechanics for allowing altruism to evolve endogenously over the long run, characterized by the authors themselves as "messy" in an earlier draft.

that examines whether a simple taste for altruism (distaste for inequality) does show interesting correlations with religious identity. Alesina and Giuliano (2011), for example, using the World Values Survey, find Christians and Jews more pro-redistribution than atheists – controlling for other things – and other major religions more *anti*-redistribution. Using the U.S. General Social Survey, they find *all* religious Americans more pro-redistribution than atheists – including political ideology among the controls – but Protestants least so.

Benjamin, Choi, and Fisher (2010) is perhaps the best exemplar along economist-integrator lines. They treat a broad array of economic behaviors that are thought to be causally associated (given other controls) with religious identity (Catholic, Christian but non-Catholic, Jewish, and Atheist/Agnostic). They creatively attack the causality challenge (economic behavior and religious identity are sometimes mutually causal, and almost always caused by third factors) by using sophisticated techniques from Psychology scholarship to manipulate ("prime") the intensity ("salience") of religious identity in a laboratory experiment on more than 800 Cornell-University students, thereby controling for eveything except their manipulation of religious identity, now arguably exogenous. They use game-theoretic proxies for trusting, taking on risk, contributing to public goods, thrift, generosity, and enthusiasm for work (the "work ethic"). They find diversely mixed results for many of these predictions (e.g., Protestantism, but not Catholicism, increases contributions to the public good, while Catholicism, but not Protestantism, increases risk-taking). Ironically, it is only Jews who embody the ("Protestant") work ethic, contra Max Weber, and there are no religious identities that seem to raise generosity or lower the discount rate. Though still unpublished as of this writing, in its three-year life as a working paper, it has an impressive 33 citations.[36]

3.5 Summing Up Integration Efforts, and Integration Bridges A-Building (?)

Both social economics and identity economics deserve enormous credit for beginning to embody norms, ethics, and non-market values into economics in rigorous ways. They also deserve credit for beginning to constructively mediate the tension between individual rational choice and neighbor-mindedness that so vexes Christian economists.

[36] Tan (2006) is a noteworthy predecessor in the same integrator spirit, with roughly 5 cites per year, and also using an experimental-economics frame. But Tan finds that offsetting channels leave no statistically strong evidence of overall religiosity influencing social preferences.

But almost surely they are still only the beginning of scholarship that will be taken seriously by scholars who are not economists. For example, Davis (2011) is an extended philosphical treatment of "economic man" as both "multiple selves" and asocial ("other-regarding"). Yuengert (2012) is an extended argument for the re-integration of economics with moral philosophy, from Aristotle to today, re-balancing the neglected normative side of economics with the domination of positive economics (on which the current chapter has indeed focused).[37] Paul Oslington has for years been exploring the potential for an integrated discipline of Theological Economics, and has successfully attracted theologians to the cause,[38] some of whom, like D. Stephen Long, have taken the initiative to begin the preliminary foreplay with economists.[39]

4. Why So Elusive the Quest for Creative Integration in Economics?

Integration of religious faith and scholarly discipline has progressed impressively in the past generation, aided by universities such as Baylor and Notre Dame, and by foundations such as the Pew Charitable Trusts and Templeton. But it seems to this observer to have gone deeper in disciplines like history, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology than in economics (and maybe deeper in natural sciences, too). Why might the quest for integration be more difficult in economics?

Is it because of the subject matter? Economics is intrinsically "in *and of* the world,"maybe more so than other disciplines. For arguable contrast, does not the subject matter of psychology or social psychology seem "closer" in some sense to Christian concerns, especially its views of broad human nature, than economics?[40]

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[37] See also Halteman and Noell (2012). These scholars are beginning to shift economics in the direction of the kind of full-bodied, morally-rooted social science that Noll (2011), pp. 72-3 briefly proposes, and that Smith (2011) envisions in his last two chapters.

[38] See Oslington (2000, 2003, 2009a,b, 2011), and Craig Blomberg's and Mary Hirchfeld's contributions to Oslington et al. (2011). Two theologians respond to Oslington's (2009a) essay, and his wry (2005b) model of a rational God implicitly beckons for theologians to pile on.

[39] See Long and Fox (with York) (2007). Long is also thinking seriously about what he characterizes as abundance economics, for objectives that are not subject to scarcity in the same way as normal, e.g., loving relationships that add clear value to human life. (It is not yet clear, however, in Long's early and informal formulations, how far beyond the familiar economics of collective (public) goods that he intends to go.)

[40] The psychology profession's American Psychological Association, for example, has itself published a series of volumes on the interface of psychology with spirituality and religion, of which one of the more recent, Miller and Delaney (2005), has an explicitly Judeo-Christian orientation.

Is it because economics is inherently technical, like systematic logic? Iannacone (2010, p. 6) comes close to claiming that because of this, "true integration" in economics is hopelessly quixotic:

"*There really is no honest way to Christianize mathematical theorems, computer algorithms, or the laws of physics. Nor is there any efficient way to Christianize microeconomic theory, econometrics, mathematical economics and other mainstream economic topics. Economic skills are hard enough to acquire through mainstream methods. Pity the poor souls charged with learning (or teaching!) standard skills through the lens of Christian thought.*"*41*

Is it because of the insularity of the discipline, perhaps its sense of intellectual superiority? ... making it resistant to constructive, integrative outreach from other Christian (and religious) scholars? ... discouraging constructive, integrative outreach from such scholars ... aggrieved animus instead? How did the psychologists (Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky) succeed in catalyzing behavioral economics ... ?

Is it because evangelical Christians, who are a large number of the main movers-and-shakers in the integration agenda, are stereotypically impatient scholars, too pre-occupied with piety and mission to devote their hearts and minds to the scholarly work? Neal (2005) expresses wry concerns that the research discussed under the heading "Christian Economics" is "not carefully crafted or precisely argued." Neal goes on to confess that his prior "conversations ... on the integration of faith and scholarship ... usually left me wanting to pull my hair out," and to worry that "The danger for the Church in ... the economics of religion [his specific focus] ... is that Christians involved in this enterprise may become a stumbling block because they become known as a group of people who do poor research, or worse, research that is intellectually dishonest."

Is it because many evangelical Christians have intellectually accepted the American arguments for "separation of church and state" (read scholarship), which in some extensions and refinements creates "two spheres," even "two kingdoms,"[42] in contrast to Muslims who

[41] Iannacone goes on to contrast this quixotism with the economics of religion: "The economics of religion lets us have our cake and eat it, too ... We can cover any number of Christian examples and use them to illustrate any number of economic concepts, yet never stray from the models and methods of mainstream economics." For one among many precursors of his views, see Elzinga (1988).

[42] On "two-kingdoms" views, see Halteman (this volume). Not all evangelicals share this two-mindedness. Abraham Kuyper, the polymath Dutch Reformed public intellectual (educator, journalist, pastor, politician, public theologian) envisioned and embodied a

have no such mixed-mind scruples as they research and debate alternative conceptions of Islamism?[43]

Conclusion, Commendation, and Forecast

Besides the limp "all of the above," I have no firm answer to whether and why Christian integrative scholarship in economics is any harder than in other disciplines. But I am encouraged by the *trend* in my non-answer. However hard it is, it seems to be becoming easier over the past generation.

I commend the interfacers of the past generation, and especially the maturing integrators of the next generation. And I look forward to future integration in the wake of fecund and lively interface.

Appendix. Orientation and Organization: What This Chapter Is *Not* About.

In the second part of my introduction, I admitted and defended a narrow approach. Here I discuss and defend it a little further. I describe what is this chapter <u>not</u> about ...

It is not about how generic, transcendent, or *ex cathedra* ethics and economics, as described, for example in Van Staveren and Peil (2009), and with Christian foundation in Finn (2006), in turn further discussed by Monsma et al. (2007).

It is not about sectarian law and institutions. Many of the 33 entries in Levine (2010), for example, deal with how Jewish law[44] interacts with secular law and institutions,

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"unified kingdom" view. Marsden (1997, pp. 37-58) goes to great lengths to dismiss the "two-kingdoms" view as undermining Christian scholarship.

43 Kuran (1997, 2004), however, echoes Iannacone and Elzinga several notes above. "It is not self-evident why the twentieth century spawned a movement committed to developing an Islamic variant of economics. After all, there is no distinctly Islamic way to build a ship, or defend a territory, or cure an epidemic, or forecast the weather. Nor are there constituencies for basing such tasks on Islamic teachings." ((2004), pp. xi-xii). He argues forcefully and controversially that the development of Islamic economics was an identity-building-and-preserving exercise, not aimed in any purposive way at solving economic problems. He may be correct, but that would not matter for purposes of the present chapter. The point here is that – whatever its dubious genesis – today's Islamic economics <u>is</u> coherent and distinctive, an "integral" and arguably "integrated approach, as Kuran (1997) grudgingly admits in his last two paragraphs. Christian economists have yet to produce anything comparable; Kuran's (2004) collection of essays draws almost 20 cites per year since its publication, compared to, a miniscule ¼ of a cite-per-year for the similarly conceived Christian collection in Henderson and Pisciotta (2006). Christians' commendable potential for contributions to identity economics, traced above, ironically feature the opposite causal link to Kuran. For Christian economist-integrators, exogenous identity alters economic outcomes; for Kuran, exogenous economic re-conceptualization shapes and supports identity.

sometimes positively and sometimes negatively, whereas critical research by Kuran (2004, Ch. 6; 2011) is devoted to the generalization that important parts of Islamic law interact negatively with economic development.

It is not about discerning economics in the sacred documents.[45]

It is not about how the insights of disciplinary economics scholarship can be useful in helping Christian congregations and para-church ministries to accomplish ministry better, or in educating their members better about the overlaps of faith and economics in social and political life (Dean, Schaffner, and Smith (2005) and Claar and Klay (2007) illustrate the former and the latter admirably).

It is not about "Heterodox Economics," though many Christian scholars are counted among its adherents. Tiemstra (2009), for example, is arguably the most dedicated promoter of "heterodox integration." I, by contrast, find heterodox economics to be incoherent, a diffusely reactive branch of economics with its own unique and overwhelming integration challenges – integration within itself[46] and with the economics mainstream.[47] My commitment to citation measures of scholarly influence would not in principle have ruled out its consideration. My commitment to Marsden-esque Christian scholarship was the main reason – heterodox economics, for the most part, disparages mainstream economics methods.

"The fact is that explicitly Christian convictions do not very often have substantial impact on the techniques used in academic detective work, which make up the bulk of the technical, scientific side of academic inquiry ... Everyone [who is part of a Christian scholarly community such as at Calvin College] recognizes that the differences [between Christian and

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[44] Law as a distinct sub-part of the religion, i.e., "law" is not the entirety of the spirit or essence of Judaism, nor, later in this sentence, Islam, as Kuran (2011) makes very clear.

[45] In Levine (2010), almost 1/3 of the chapters could be characterized this way. See, for additional examples, Brams (1980) or Smith (1999, 2000, 2002).

[46] Tiemstra (2009, p. 20) distills several "schools" of heterodox economics: post-Keynesian, Austrian, institutional economics, and the social-economics tradition. He then observes that "Many of these efforts overlap, since none of these schools offers a general canonical model in the way neoclassical economics does." There are no citations to Tiemstra's distillation-survey as of early 2012. See also Tiemstra (forthcoming).

[47] I adopt Marglin's (2012), p.1, perspective, though without apology: "What is economics? There is no high priest, no final arbiter of what constitutes economics. My characterization necessarily involves a subjective element; it is my reading of the center of gravity of an evolving discipline with a gamut of practitioners and practices. Notwithstanding the variety, there is a mainstream so dominant that the other streams have become mere trickles. If we focus on what is taught in the typical principles course, or on the entire undergraduate curriculum, or even on the content of graduate theory courses, there is consensus, and it is this consensus to which the term economics refers in this essay."

other scholarship] will not be apparent in the technical dimensions of their work, but that implications of the faith may sometimes have an important bearing on their theories and interpretations."[48]

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[48] Marsden (1997), pp. 47, 61. The University of Notre Dame, from which Marsden retired, and arguably one of the likeliest homes to an integrated "heterodox" approach to Christian economics, decided in late 2009 to abolish its parallel department of economics and policy studies, in which most of Notre Dame "heterodox" economists sat (Glenn (2009), and grow only the (mainstream) department of economics and econometrics.

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